Keeping in touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 464-5100.

MARCH, 1990

JANUARY, 1990
TOP 20 TITHES

1.	MCC Dallas	Dallas, TX	$2,515.56
2.	MCC Washington DC	Washington, DC	2,326.63
3.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC	Ft Lauderdale, FL	1,894.42
4.	MCC San Francisco	San Francisco, CA	1,648.50
5.	MCC of the Resurrection	Houston, TX	1,567.00
6.	MCC in the Valley	N Hollywood, CA	1,375.73
7.	MCC Los Angeles	Culver City, CA	1,227.06
8.	MCC Long Beach	Long Beach, CA	1,215.06
9.	MCC San Diego	San Diego, CA	1,164.58
10.	Church of the Trinity MCC	Sarasota, FL	1,110.37
11.	First MCC of Kansas	Wichita, KS	894.43
12.	MCC of the Rockies	Denver, CO	886.00
13.	King of Peace MCC	St Petersburg, FL	880.61
14.	Agape MCC of Ft. Worth	Ft. Worth, TX	737.93
15.	MCC New York	New York City, NY	694.82
16.	MCC Tampa	Tampa, FL	690.13
17.	River City MCC	Sacramento, CA	653.97
18.	Joy MCC	Orlando, FL	565.87
19.	MCC of Northern Virginia	Oakton, VA	505.47
20.	MCC Baltimore	Baltimore, MD	491.55

JANUARY, 1990
TOP 20 PER CAPITA

1.	Open Arms MCC	Rochester, NY	36.35
2.	MCC of Northern Virginia	Oakton, VA	32.20
3.	River City Living MCC	San Antonio, TX	32.18
4.	Church of the Trinity MCC	Sarasota, FL	31.57
5.	Whitewater Valley MCC	Richmond, IN	31.55
6.	New Covenant MCC	Anaheim, CA	29.41
7.	MCC Rockville	Rockville, MD	25.51
8.	Maranatha MCC	San Lorenzo, CA	25.34
9.	MCC Los Angeles	Culver City, CA	24.35
10.	MCC Mt. Vernon	Mt. Vernon, WA	21.00
11.	Christ the Redeemer MCC	Evanston, IL	20.92
12.	Overlake MCC	Bellevue, WA	19.74
13.	Good Samaritan MCC	Whittier, CA	19.28
14.	Golden Gate MCC	San Francisco, CA	19.00
15.	Christ Alive MCC	Vancouver BC, CAN	18.99
16.	MCC Calgary	Alberta, CAN	18.93
17.	MCC Shreveport	Shreveport, LA	18.76
18.	Faith Eternal MCC	Springfield, IL	18.39
19.	Calvary MCC	Redwood City, CA	18.29
20.	MCC in the Valley	N Hollywood, CA	18.10

[Editor's Note: We would like to apologize to Golden Gate MCC, San Francisco, CA for omitting them from the November, 1989 Top 20 Tithes List. Sorry for the error.]

PRAISES

Praise God! MCC in the Valley, N Hollywood, CA held installation services for Rev. Sherre Boothman as their new pastor on February 25, 1990 with over 400 in attendance. Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson officiated and former pastor Rev. Ken Martin was also in attendance. Congratulations Sherre and MCC in the Valley!

Rev. Sandra Robinson will be officially installed as Dean of Samaritan College on Sunday, March 11, 1990 at 7:00 PM at MCC Los Angeles. Officiating at the installation service will be Rev. Nancy Wilson, Rev. Sherre Boothman, and Rev. Troy Perry. Congratulations Sandi and Samaritan College!

Joy MCC in Orlando closed purchase of a new church facility within 1½ miles of downtown Orlando, FL. In addition to an attractive church building, they now own approximately two acres of property. Congratulations! Joy MCC.

River City MCC in Sacramento, CA also closed purchase in January on a beautiful bank building located in the same block as their present property. The building had already been renovated for use as a church. Congratulations!

A special welcome to all our new District Coordinators: ECD - Mr. Rod McAvoy; GLAD - Mr. Jay Neely; SWD - Rev. Don Pederson; NED - Rev. Jeffrey Pulling; and ENSD - Rev. Hong Tan. Please keep these special people in your prayers as they attend their first General Council meeting.

PRAYERS

Prayers are requested for Rev. Chuck Larsen of San Francisco, CA and his family as his mother passed away on January 18, 1990. Your cards of love and support can be sent to Rev. Larsen at 134 Church Street, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Rev. Jim Harris of Shreveport, LA, suffered a heart attack on January 18, 1990. Please keep him in your prayers and if you wish to send cards of love and support, send them to: 2725 Wisteria St., Shreveport, LA 71108.

Rev. Brad Anderson of Los Angeles, CA is in the hospital along with his spouse Bob. Please keep them both in your prayers.

Please keep the General Council in your prayers as they meet March 6-13 in Los Angeles. Also keep the People of Color Executive Committee in prayers as they meet.

1990 REVISED CLERGY MANUAL

Yes! The new 1990 Revised edition of the Clergy Manual is here! This manual is an all-inclusive manual compiled from The Clergy Manual, The Student Clergy Manual, and the new Supervisor's Manual. The never-ending frustration of paging between manuals is over. Everything is now conveniently in one manual, in an easy-to-find format, at your fingertips, and attractively bound in a 3-ring binder for easy insertion of notes or other relevant items.

The 1990 Revised Clergy Manual is a valuable resource book for anyone thinking of pursuing a ministry in the U.F.-M.C.C., anyone already in ministry, or anyone thinking of training another in ministry. This manual also contains valuable information for congregations in developing healthy working relationships with their Clergy and/or Student Clergy.

All future revisions to the Clergy Manual will not be published until the January following a General Conference, eliminating any minor changes between conferences. In other words, you get a manual with a two-year guarantee! With the new format, revisions can be easily inserted keeping your manual up-to-date with current U.F.M.C.C. polity.

The 1990 Revised Clergy Manual is now available. The cost of the manual is $45 which includes shipping & handling. Orders for the new manual can be sent to:

U.F.M.C.C. Church Services
5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite #304
Los Angeles, CA 90029
(213) 464-5100

OUTREACH MINISTRIES IN THE ENSD

Rev. Frank Scott has initiated a ministry as New Church Development Officer for the Outreach Ministries program of the European North Sea District. Resigning the pastorate of MCC Bournemouth after four years of service, Frank took up this new work on 1 February. The ministry is being funded by donations from district churches in the United Kingdom in 1990. Work has already commenced in Cardiff, Wales and in Plymouth, with visits projected to target communities, including Oxford and Edinburgh, Scotland.

NEW PASTOR IN BOURNEMOUTH

Neil Thomas was elected Pastor of MCC Bournemouth, England on 11 February. Neil has been a member of the Bournemouth church for 9 years and has just completed 5 years as Student Clergy. He will be applying for licensure this Spring. At age 23, Neil is the youngest pastor in the European North Sea District. He has already taken steps to lead the church in purchasing its own building, projected for the Autumn of this year.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE COORDINATOR SELECTED!

Effective Wednesday, February 14, 1990, Rev. Bob Arthur will be coordinating the processing, disseminating and grading of the correspondence coursework for Samaritan College. He will assume these duties for Samaritan as he builds ministry with New Covenant MCC in Anaheim, CA, where he is on staff. Rev. Arthur will begin is teach Greek at New Covenant's newly formed Academy March 8, 1990. Rev. Arthur has an M.A. degree in Bible from Bob Jones University and will structure the Correspondence Course Department for six months. At that time the new coordinator will be announced. Samaritan is very fortunate to have Rev. Arthur at this time. He is instrumental in developing a new concept for UFMCC - intra denominational consortium.

For information concerning Correspondence courses contact Rev. Arthur at Samaritan College, 5930 Comey Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90034, (213) 934-0122.

POSITION OPEN

MCC Calgary is looking for a Pastor. The position is presently defined as Part-time with a salary of $500 per month minimum. We are a Commissioned Church of 32 members in a city with a population of 650,000. The opportun for growth is considerable. Licensed Clergy, or Stude Clergy with experience, are invited to apply. For a letter of application, please write: Pastoral Search Committee, 24 Radcliffe Court S.E., Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2A 6B1.

1990 NATIONAL BISEXUAL CONFERENCE

BiPOL, an independent Bi/Lesbian/Gay political organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, is sponsoring a bisexual conference in San Francisco to advocate bisexual identity and rights. The conference will instill a sense of pride and visibility to bisexuals and their friends as well as an opportunity to share information, ideas, and goals. The conference will include cultural, educational, political and social events to promote and celebrate the bisexual identity.

Bisexuals and Bisupportive people will gather from the Bay Area, across the nation and five countries for this historic event on June 20-24, 1990. BiPOL encourages and welcomes bisupportive people from these communities to participate in the conference to promote understanding and alliance-building.

Housing and registration information is available calling (415) 775-1990; or writing BiPOL, 584 Castro St., #422, San Francisco, CA 94114.

GAY PRIDE WEEK?

The Pomona, CA City Council, which a month ago proclaimed the last week in June as Gay and Human Rights Week, reversed itself after receiving complaints from local conservative groups and churches.

The Council rescinded its proclamation by a 3-2 vote before a packed chamber of more than 250 people, and then declared the week of June 24th, Human Rights Week, without any reference to gays.

Councilman Bryant, who sponsored the original proclamation said he changed his mind after receiving a barrage of phone calls and letters. Bryant submitted the gay rights proclamation to the council last month at the request of Patrick Greene, a Pomona resident who said he has a gay stepson who suffers from AIDS. It declared that Pomona "recognizes that the gay and lesbian community has helped to show to everyone that all people can live and work together in harmony and still maintain a relationship of respect and trust."

Matt Plummer, an employee of Focus on the Family, a Pomona based Christian ministry, told the council, "It is wrong of government to recognize and sanitize a life style that unnatural and harmful to society."

Rev. Marianne Van Fossen, pastor of MCC of the Pomona Valley said, "The notion that God condemns our love is erroneous. There is nothing in the Bible to condemn homosexual people or how we express our love. It is my deepest prayer that those who hate the way we love will learn to thank God for love in all its forms."

Linda Berard of the 140 member Pomona-San Gabriel Valley Gay and Lesbian Coaltion said homosexuality is a deeply ingrained part of one's personality. "A person's sexual orientation is an integral part of one's self-identity and one's wholeness," she said. "It is ludicrous to think that one would choose or prefer to be hated and stigmatized if they could change."

Council members Nell Soto and Tomas Ursua stood by the proclamation. "I do not have a right to judge anyone's life style," Soto said. "I leave that to the Creator." Ursua said, "If I found out my daughter was gay, I could not fathom loving her any less than I do now. I would defend her right to be different. I would defend her humanity."

Van Fossen said she will "recommend that the MCC Church hold Gay Pride Week regardless of the city's permission. We are proud. We have rights and we will celebrate our lives regardless of their prejudice, fear and ignorance."

BOOK REVIEW

(by Rev. Jeffrey Pulling, Ph.D.)

["Experiencing God in Stress and Loss: A Liberating Journey Through the Book of Job", by Cari Bourette, Copyright, 1989]

The book of Job is one of the most difficult books in all the Bible to understand since most of its content is a dialogue (or argument, if you will) back and forth between different points of view. Scholars of the Hebrew Scriptures have debated for centuries as to the message that the author (or final editor) of this wisdom book was trying to communicate. Scholarly books on Job abound, but there are very few treatments of this book that make it accessible to the average person. In this booklet Cari Bourette succeeds well in explaining the power of the book of Job and making its insights available to a general audience.

The experience of suffering can lead one to a deeper understanding of and relationship with God. The Latin American theologian Gustavo Gutierrez, in his book "On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent", draws on the experience of the poor and oppressed in the Third World in order to articulate a biblical theology of undeserved human suffering. What Gutierrez does for the Third World, Bourette does for those of us living in privileged Western society as she draws the connections between Job's suffering and the suffering that we experience in stress, loss, and grieving. Both of these explorations of the book of Job are bold, insightful applications of this biblical book for contemporary readers.

What I found particularly helpful about Bourette's booklet is her wholistic, integrative style. She enables a dialogue between the biblical material and contemporary psychology, counseling, and the experience of abused women and children. She guides her readers on a journey through the book of Job so that they, like Job, can leave behind a fearful, punishing God and come to embrace the "God Who Is", the God who is with us through everything. Although she draws upon Harold Kushner's book "When Bad Things Happen to Good People", she goes further than Rabbi Kushner in presenting a God who understands our suffering and who is with us in our suffering. She certainly concurs with Rabbi Kushner, however, on the inadequacy of traditional Judeo-Christian concepts of God as the Direct Causer of all things and as Giver of rewards and punishments.

(Continued next page)

Book Review (cont'd)

Readers who are concerned about defending traditional (some would say "orthodox") understandings of God may become angry at Bourette's booklet. I would maintain, however, that for them to be consistent they would also have to get angry at the book of Job for challenging their theological assumptions and at God for not staying in the neat boxes we build for the Deity. Bourette's booklet, when read with an open heart and mind, would be a helpful companion for all of us who question God or our ideas about God when we experience loss and/or suffering.

A member of the UFMCC since 1984, Cari Bourette currently finds a church home at MCC Los Angeles. Her degrees include a B.S. in Physics and a M.S. in Counseling. She is presently a Psychological Intern, pursuing a Doctorate in Psychology.

Copies of her booklet are available for $3.00 US each from: UFMCC Church Services, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

SAMARITAN COLLEGE TUITION INCREASE

In October, 1989, the Samaritan College Board of Trustees increased tuition from $75.00 per credit hour to $85.00 per credit hour effective at the Orientation Program, 1990.

2ND LESBIAN LATIN AMERICAN CONFERENCE TO BE HELD

The Lesbian Feminist Group of Costa Rica, Las Entendidas, will be hosting the 2nd Latin American and Caribbean Lesbian Feminist Conference in San Jose, Costa Rica, on the 11th-13th of April, 1990.

The Conference was originally scheduled for Lima, Peru, but GALF, the Lesbian Feminist Self-Knowledge Group decided not to host the conference due to violence against gays and lesbians and the political instability in Peru.

Both left and right wing groups in Peru have been attacking alternative social movements such as feminists and homosexuals. The recent assassination of feminist leader Consuelo Garcia and death threats against two other feminists caused GALF to fear for the safety of conference participants.

The reports of the murder of nine gay men in Tarapoto, Peru, under the pretext of a moralizing action, by an armed group who proclaimed their purpose to be the elimination of drug addicts, prostitutes and homosexuals, became the final influence, causing the Organizing Commission to withdraw their plans to host the conference in Peru.

For more information on the conference in Costa Rica contact GLFC, Apartado 1057, San Pedro de Montes de Oca., San Jose, Costa Rica, or the International Lesbian Information Service at ILIS, c/o COC, Rozenstraat 8, 1016 NX Amsterdam, The Netherlands. For membership in the ILIS, which includes their outstanding "ILIS Newsletter" in English and Spanish, send a $15 US international money order to the Amsterdam address.

COMMON THREADS

"Common Threads: Stories From the Quilt", the critically acclaimed feature documentary about the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, was invited to the 40th Berlin International Film Festival. The festival took place February 9-20 at various theaters throughout West Berlin, Germany. Common Threads was screened February 10-18.

Panels were displayed from February 9-17 at the Rathaus Schoneberg (West Berlin City Hall). In addition, Quilt Panels were also seen by thousands in the windows of KaDeWe, Berlin's largest department store.

Markus Faigle, International Events Coordinator for the NAMES Project, states, "Having Common Threads included in the prestigious Berlin Film Festival and having the Quilt in Berlin at the same time, presents two wonderful opportunities to reach thousands of people with the Quilt. We are very grateful for the chance to share its vitally important message of the human tragedy of the AIDS epidemic and the need for compassion in the face of AIDS."

Common Threads is a portrait of the first decade of the AIDS epidemic in America. Through the Quilt, the film introduces five individuals who have died of AIDS - from an 11 year-old suburban boy to a gay Olympic athlete to an inner-city IV-drug user. Their lives before and after AIDS are recreated using home movies, photos, and the recollections of friends, lovers and families. The film is narrated by Dustin Hoffman, and Bobby McFerrin composed and performs the original score.

Common Threads originally aired on the Home Box Office Network in October 1989. It is presently having a theatrical run in Los Angeles, and will soon be available on videotape. Those interested in public showings of the film may contact Direct Cinema at (213) 652-8000. Proceeds from distribution of the film will be donated to the NAMES Project.